

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

historic name Dr. Albert Johnson House

other names: NA; site number: DHR#100-5015-0003

2. Location

street & number 814 Duke Street not for publication N/A city or town Alexandria vicinity N/A state
Virginia code VA county Alexandria (Independent City) code 510 zip code 22314

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this
X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties
in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part
60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this
property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional
comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register

 See continuation sheet.

 determined eligible for the National Register

 See continuation sheet.

 determined not eligible for the National Register

 removed from the National Register

 other (explain):

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action _____

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
Dr. Albert Johnson House
Alexandria, Virginia
Multiple Property Listing: African American Historic Resources of Alexandria, Virginia

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing African American Historic Resources of Alexandria, Virginia

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

ITALIANATE

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
roof ASPHALT
walls BRICK
other CAST IRON STOOP

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
☒ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
☐ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

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Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
☐ B removed from its original location.
☐ C a birthplace or a grave.
☐ D a cemetery.
☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
☐ F a commemorative property.
☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE Sub.: Black

Period of Significance 1896-1940

Significant Dates N/A

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) Dr. Albert Johnson

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (See footnotes in Statement of Significance.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1,584 square feet

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing		Zone Easting Northing	
1	18 322040 4296900	2	___ ___
3	___ ___	4	___ ___

☐ See continuation sheet.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Alexandria, VA: Map 74.04, Block 01, Lot 06.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city lot that has been historically associated with Dr. Albert Johnson's ownership of the property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Calvit (1994) and Barbara B. Ballentine (2002) for the Office of Historic Alexandria
organization City of Alexandria date August 1994, updated 2001-2002
street & number 301 King St., P.O. Box 178 telephone 703-838-4554
city or town Alexandria state VA zip code 22313

CONTINUATION SHEET

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ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Summary Description

The Dr. Albert Johnson House is located at 814 Duke Street, a main thoroughfare in Alexandria. Built in the mid-19th century, the Italianate-style rowhouse, which faces Duke Street to the north, is a two-story, three-bay, side-hall-plan building, with a raised basement. Distinctive elements of the facade include a decorative wooden cornice, ornamented entry, and cast-iron stoop. The house is situated in "the Bottoms," the oldest African American neighborhood in Alexandria. This primary elevation was the "outward" side of the Bottoms and many educated African Americans inhabited the houses on this side of Duke Street.

Detailed Description

The north facade is composed of red pressed brick in a running bond pattern with a beaded mortar joint. The main entrance, on the first floor, features a shallow projecting wooden entablature supported by decorative brackets, a four-paneled door, and a transom. A distinctive cast-iron stoop leads to the entrance. An exterior door to the basement is located below the stoop. The cornice of the dwelling features decorative brackets and ornamental dentil moulding. The upper brackets differ from those that support the entrance entablature. The window openings of the facade are topped with flat brick arches on all three levels. The east elevation is a solid wall of common brick that faces a narrow alley.

The house was renovated in 1974. The facade was repointed and the windows were replaced with six-over-six sash windows on the second floor and basement levels, and six-over-nine sash windows on the main level, all with pop-in muntins and storm windows. Shutters on the facade are fixed to the wall and are not original to the dwelling.

Interior Description

The three-bay, side-hall-plan brick townhouse at 814 Duke Street has been altered extensively on the interior. The original shallow vestibule just inside the front facade still protects the second entry door.

A second entry door, with decorative glass upper light and transom, appears to date from the first period of construction. In addition, the single-run stair, with turned balusters and newel post also appears to date from the original construction. The plaster has been removed from the party wall adjacent to the stair on the west side of the building to expose the underlying brick.

The ground floor stair hall has been further altered by removing the majority of the partition between the stair and the front room and adding three 4x4 turned wooden structural posts. The original dividing wall between the two front rooms on the ground floor of the main body of the house has been removed entirely to create one large room. The trim and exposed brick fireplace in this large living area appear to date from the late 20th century.

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A two-room-deep ell is attached to the rear of the main body of the house. The first room of the ell has been expanded to the full width of the lot on the ground floor and a skylight installed above the eastern portion. The next room to the south is used as a kitchen. None of the original trim or finishes in the ground floor of the ell remain.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 3

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The house at 814 Duke Street is significant as the former residence of Dr. Albert Johnson, one of the city's first licensed African American physicians. Dr. Johnson graduated from Howard University in 1892 and practiced medicine in Alexandria for forty-six years. Dr. Johnson lived at 814 Duke Street from 1896 to 1940, using the lower level as his medical office. He was active in civic and fraternal organizations. The house is also significant in the historic context of residential development in "the Bottoms," the oldest African American neighborhood in Alexandria. His house serves as a physical reminder of his life and achievements.

Historical Background

Albert Johnson was born in Lynchburg, Virginia on November 16, 1866, the son of William and Harriet Johnson, both of whom were former slaves. A public education system was available for all African Americans living in Virginia by 1870 and Johnson received his primary and secondary education in Lynchburg public schools. He graduated from high school on June 25, 1886, and secured a position as a public school teacher. Johnson taught in the Lynchburg school system for four years. In 1889, he began studies at Howard University's Medical College, located in Washington, D.C.¹

The curriculum at the university, while Johnson attended, was a three-year program. The opening ceremonies for Johnson's first year included an address by Dr. J.G.R. Dufour. Music was supplied by the United States Marine Band led by John Phillip Sousa. Although Johnson was undoubtedly excited to be attending the college, conditions there were described as less than ideal. According to a Howard University Medical Department history, materials were so scarce, that at times, as many as twelve students were assigned to one cadaver.

Johnson graduated April 13, 1892, with commencement exercises being held at the First Congregational Church in Washington, D.C. He passed the Virginia Board of Medical Examiners exam on September 16, 1892, and moved back to Lynchburg to begin his practice. Johnson lived and worked in that city, but decided to move to Alexandria in October 1894.

CONTINUATION SHEET

¹Afro-American Institute for Historic Preservation and Community Development, "A Study of Historic Sites in the Metropolitan Washington Regions of Northern Virginia and Southern Maryland Importantly Related to the History of Afro-Americans," Part III, 1978, 80-85.

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In 1895, Johnson met and proposed marriage to Maude Chinn, a native of Alexandria. While they were engaged and planning their wedding, Chinn fell mortally ill. Johnson and Chinn were married shortly before she died. On June 7, 1899, Johnson married again, this time to Sarah N. Morton, a resident of Washington, D.C. They had two children.

Johnson's life and work is significant because he was one of few African American doctors to practice in the city. In fact, the 1900 Alexandria City Directory listed him as being the only one. He was one of the first, if not the first, professionally trained and licensed African American physicians practicing in Alexandria. His responsibility to the African American community was great. The City Directory for 1907 lists only two physicians serving African Americans; 1924 lists three and only five or six are listed up to the mid-twentieth century. Johnson was active in the community, both professionally and privately. He was selected chairman of the committee responsible for raising funds for the men's ward of the new Alexandria Hospital that was constructed between 1912-1916. Johnson's committee exceeded its obligation of \$300 and was able to raise \$500 for the new ward. A member of several civic organizations in Alexandria, he served as master of the Acacia Masonic Lodge, No. 32, and belonged to the Odd Fellows, and Elks organizations. Even after moving to Alexandria, Dr. Johnson maintained ties to Washington, DC. He was a member of the Berean Baptist Church in that city for nearly 30 years, serving as a member of the Board of Deacons and holding the position of chairman from 1925 until 1940. In 1940 he moved to Washington, DC and again set up a medical office in his home at 620 R Street, NW. He died in 1949 after being in ill health for three years.²

Dr. Johnson purchased the house on Duke Street May 2, 1896 for \$1,050 from Albert Stuart, Jr. He and his family lived there until 1940. He used the lower level of the house as an office. He and his wife sold the house June 14, 1941 to Annie Rose, a widow, who was to become an important person in Alexandria's recent African American history.³

Dr. Johnson's house at 814 Duke Street is located in the neighborhood known as "the Bottoms." The Bottoms was the first free black neighborhood in Alexandria, first settled in the 1790s. The area was marshy and undesirable land when it was leased to free men. Johnson's choice to live in this neighborhood almost one hundred years after it was settled illustrates its identity as an African American community.

²Copy of Obituary dated July 2, 1949, Washington, DC newspaper not named. Martin Luther King Library, Washington, DC.

³ Corporation Court of the City of Alexandria Deed Book 36, 244-246; Deed Book 176, 18.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section PHOTO Page 5

All photographs are of:

Dr. ALBERT JOHNSON HOUSE
Alexandria, Virginia
VDHR File Number: 100-5015-0003
Elizabeth Calvit, exterior photographs
Al Cox, interior photographs

All negatives are stored in the archives of the Department of Historic Resources in Richmond, Virginia

DATE: July 1994
VIEW OF: North facade
NEG. NO.: 19170: 33
PHOTO 1 of 7

DATE: July 1994
VIEW OF: Detail of entrance and stair
NEG. NO.: 19170: 31
PHOTO 2 of 7

DATE: July 1994
VIEW OF: Detail of cornice of facade
NEG. NO.: 19170: 32
PHOTO 3 of 7

DATE: April 2002
VIEW OF: First floor main entry vestibule and
corridor looking northwest
NEG. NO.: 19631: 1
PHOTO 4 of 7

DATE: April 2002
VIEW OF: First floor stair corridor looking
southwest from Parlor
NEG. NO.: 19631: 2
PHOTO 5 OF 7

DATE: April 2002
VIEW OF: First floor Parlor looking southeast
from stair corridor
NEG. NO.: 19631: 3
PHOTO 6 of 7

DATE: April 2002
VIEW OF: First floor ell expansion into side
yard with skylight above looking southeast
NEG. NO.: 19631: 4
PHOTO 7 of 7

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